



# *Milwaukee County*

Supervisor Marina Dimitrijevic, 4<sup>th</sup> District

## **THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE'S BUDGET TWILIGHT ZONE**

*An editorial from Milwaukee County Supervisor Marina Dimitrijevic*

As we continue to enjoy our hazy summer in Milwaukee County, many residents have expressed their gratitude about the actions of the Milwaukee County Board last year in saving our County Pools from the budget knife of County Executive Scott Walker. Adoption of the 2008 Milwaukee County Budget is right around the corner and already it appears that Milwaukee County residents will be handed a budget from the Twilight Zone. This fiscal delusion is like a broken record that keeps playing the same old song. There is talk once again from the Executive Branch of more cuts to quality of life services such as our County Parks System and the Milwaukee County Transit System.

While we are in the preliminary stages of the budget process, it is still appalling that the County Executive's department heads are submitting the same budgets the public and County Board rejected last year. Over 500 residents attended the Milwaukee County Board's annual public budget hearing to voice their opposition to cuts in parks funding, pool closings, and transit fare increases. The proposed budget cuts will have long-lasting effects on both the parks and transit systems.

Cutting over 50 parks employees, along with closing pools and community centers, will only serve as the demise of one of our most precious resources, the Milwaukee County Parks System. We should be investing in our amenities, turning things around, and promoting and preserving the parks for future generations. The proposed closing of the only two Milwaukee County-run community centers is just plain illogical. Our parks and recreation programs offer many self-improvement opportunities for the youth and seniors in our community. These programs have proven to be successful in preventing crime by providing productive, recreational alternatives for young people.

Lastly, the transit proposal to eliminate 13 routes and cut service to 13 more is a move in the wrong direction for public transit in Milwaukee County. We should be reducing the fares and increasing service in hopes of attracting new riders and reducing traffic and pollution. In addition, the proposal to charge \$1.50 more per roundtrip for disabled residents is wrong. For many, Milwaukee County-run Transit Plus is the only transportation option and provides hope for independence. A core part of Milwaukee County's mission is to provide safety-net services to people who need the most help.

The County Board will receive County Executive Walker's Proposed 2008 Budget at the end of September. As I have done in the previous years, I will hold many listening sessions throughout our neighborhood to gain your input during the budget process. With your help, we can bring the 2008 Budget out of the County Executive's Twilight Zone and start making real progress in Milwaukee County.